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Your Reference: ARC919990227GB1
Application No: GB 0103095.6

12 March 2004

Dear Sirs

Patents Act 1977: Examination Report under Section 18(3)

Latest date for reply: 26 May 2004

I have re-examined your application in response to your agent's letter of 29 January 2004 and enclose two copies of my further examination report.

By the above date you should either file amendments to meet the objections in the enclosed report or make observations on them. If you do not, the application may be refused.

Yours faithfully

Kalim Yasseen
Examiner

[†]Use of E-mail: Please note that e-mail should be used for correspondence only.



Your ref: ARC919990227GB1
Application No: GB 0103095.6
Applicant: International Business Machines Corporation
Latest date for reply: 26 May 2004

Examiner: Kalim Yassoon
Tel: 01633 813623
Date of report: 12 March 2004
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Patents Act 1977 Examination Report under Section 18(3)

Basis of the examination

1. My examination has taken account of the amendments filed with your agent's letter of 29 January 2004.

Novelty

2. The invention as defined in claims 1-19 is still not new because it has already been disclosed in the following documents:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| US 5 579 471 A (IBM) | see whole document especially column 2 line 36 -column 3 line 67 |
| US 5 806 061 A (HEWLETT-PACKARD) | see whole document especially column 2 lines 1-23, column 3 lines 28-45, column 5 lines 19-40 |
| WO 99/67698 A2 (PHILIPS) | see whole document especially page 2 line 25 et seq |
| US 5 983 176 A (MAGNIFI) | see whole document especially column 1 lines 1-46, column 8 lines 7 et seq, mentions searching of audio, video files |
| EP 0 990 998 A2 (CANON) | see whole document especially paragraph 0117 |

3. You state in your covering letter that "in the present invention the user does not define a textual query which then has to be interpreted but, instead, the system produces the query, for the search for associated multimedia resources, based on processing of the contextual input data", however, the invention as presently claimed still appears to be anticipated by the prior art listed above. The IBM document discloses an image query system in which a user can input contextual type information into an image recognition system. The system processes the user input and formulates a query. The query returns any associated matches. The input means into the system (keyboard, mouse etc) are regarded as being contextual input devices. The input data comprises such information as "blue at the top, white at the bottom" (in an attempt to retrieve a beach scene with sky at the top and sand at the bottom, see column 2 lines 42-46, column 5 lines 61-65). Such information can be regarded as being contextual input data as defined by the present invention. The other



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[Examination Report contd.]

documents also appear to disclose information search systems in which a search is done using contextual input data.

4. The definition given by the invention to 'contextual input data' (page 4 lines 27-36) is broad in scope and appears to be met by a user input (e.g a date) into a conventional search engine. Moreover, what exactly constitutes contextual data is regarded as being subjective. The definition of a 'contextual input device' also does not appear to sufficiently restricted and appears to be anticipated by computer data input means such as a keyboard or a mouse.

Clarity

5. The independent claims should be amended to clearly distinguish them from the prior art.

Other matters

6. The description should reflect any changes that are made to the claims.